

Appl. No. 10/037,829

Reply to Office action of October 13, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application, and have been rejected. Claims 1, 9, 15, and 19 have been amended and Claim 11 has been cancelled.

I. Objections to the Specification

The Examiner states that the current title of the invention is not descriptive and kindly suggests that the title be changed to read "VEHICULAR CAMERA SYSTEM MOUNTED BEHIND A DECORATIVE GRILL DOOR". This has been done by way of amendment to the Specification.

II. Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Examiner rejects Claim 1-8, 10-18, 20, and 21 on the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) has being clearly anticipated by Salvio et al. Applicant's independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the recitation of a controller coupled to the camera and to the actuator for opening the door and activating the camera when exterior ambient light falls below a predetermined threshold. No such structure is shown or suggested in Salvio et al. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's amended independent Claim 1 is allowable. Dependent Claims 3-10 and 12-14 are believed to properly depend, either directly or indirectly, from Applicant's amended independent Claim 1 and are believed to be allowable therewith. Dependent Claim 9 has been amended to render its wording consistent with Applicant's amended independent Claim 1. Claim 11 has been cancelled.

Dependent Claim 3 which depends from Claim 2 recites that the door of Claim 1 has a decorative exterior, and dependent Claim 14 which depends from Claim 2 recites that a decorative emblem is coupled to an exterior of the door of Claim 1. Neither of these features is shown or suggested in the Salvio et al. reference. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 3 and 14 are not only allowable because they depend from Applicant's amended independent Claim 1, but that they are also allowable because they claim features not shown or suggested in the cited reference.

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III. Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Examiner rejects Claims 9 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salvio et al. in view of McNamara. Examiner states that Salvio et al. discloses a controller 44 for energizing the motor, but states that Salvio et al. differs from the present invention in that it fails to particularly disclose a light detector as specified in Claims 9 and 19. Examiner goes on to state that McNamara however discloses such a detector in Figures 1 and 2. The features recited in the original dependent Claims 9 and 19 have now been incorporated into amended independent Claims 1 and 15, respectively; therefore Applicant's comments below are directed to Applicant's amended independent Claims 1 and 15.

Applicant respectfully disagree with Examiner's conclusion that McNamara discloses a light detector as specified in Applicant's amended independent Claims 1 and 15. These claims clearly recite that Applicant's inventive night vision enhancement system comprises a controller for opening the door and activating the camera when ambient light falls below a predetermined threshold. Referring to McNamara, luminance threshold detector 24 includes an input from signal processing unit 10 and provides outputs to switch 32 via link 30 and switch 18 via link 26, respectively. With respect to this McNamara, states in paragraph [0018] that a first analog switch 18 is connected to an AGC output of the signal processor 10 through an AGC output line 20. Switch 18 opens or closes the AGC feedback loop by alternately connecting the AGC output line 20 or an AGC maximum gain reference signal on a AGC maximum gain reference line 22. Switch 18 is controlled by a first luminance detector output signal of a luminance threshold detector 24 on a first luminance threshold detector output line 26. McNamara further states in paragraph [0019] that the luminance threshold detector 24 has a second luminance threshold detector output signal provided on a second luminance threshold detector output line 30 and that the second luminance threshold detector output signal controls a second analog switch 32. Switch 32 alternately connects an iris control output signal from the signal processor 10 on an iris control output line 34 and an iris full open reference signal on an iris full open reference line 36 to an iris control input signal line 38.

Referring now to paragraph [0021] McNamara states that the luminance threshold detector 24 detects the luminance of the extreme top portion of the video signal or about the first ten horizontal video lines. The luminance level of the extreme top portion is averaged and

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compared to a preset reference luminance. If the detected and averaged luminance level is less than the preset reference, first and second luminance output signals go high. In response, the first analog switch 18 connects the AGC maximum gain reference signal to the AGC input line 28 of the signal processor 10, and the second analog switch 32 connects the iris full open reference line 36 to the iris control input line 38. As a result, signal processor 10 sets the AGC to maximum and the iris control to full open. In paragraph [0022], McNamara states that if the detected and averaged luminance level is more than the preset reference, first and second luminance output signals go low. In response, the first analog switch 18 connects the AGC output line 20 to the AGC input line 28 of the signal processor 10, and the second analog switch 32 connects the iris control output line 34 to the iris control input line 28. As a result, the feedback loop for automatic gain control and automatic iris control are closed. Clearly, McNamara's luminance threshold detector does not function to open the door and activate the camera. In contrast, it generates a signal for enabling or disabling the automatic gain control of the electronic signal and the automatic electronic iris size of a CCD image sensor array. Thus, it is respectively submitted that Applicant's amended independent Claims 1 and 15 distinguish over and are an unobvious view of the cited references taken singly or in valid combination.

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IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, in view of Applicant's amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-10 and 12-21 are allowable and that Examiner's rejections under 35 USC § 102 and 103 have been overcome. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the application, as amended, is now in condition for allowance, and such allowance is therefore earnestly requested.

If for some reason Applicant has not requested a sufficient extension and/or has not paid a sufficient fee for this response and/or for the extension necessary to prevent abandonment on this application, please consider this a request for an extension for the required time period and/or authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 07-0960 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: _____, 2005

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